

FABLES 70


VERTIGO

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suggested for
mature readers
vertigo.comics.com



THE FARM.

MR. BLUE?

MR. BLUE?

KINGDOM COME

In which we pause for a moment, to catch our breath, gird our heart, and take a last look at a relatively peaceful Farm, before plunging headlong into the chaos of total war.

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MR. BLUE?

MR. BLUE?

SO, ARE THESE MORE SUPPLIES GOING TO HAVEN?

I DON'T THINK SO. MOST OF THIS STUFF IS GUNS, AND I HEAR HAVEN DON'T ALLOW NO GUNS. I THINK THIS MEANS IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR WAR--Y'KNOW, *OUR* WAR.





MR. BLUE?

IT'S TIME TO GET UP.

~WHUH?~



YEEAAAAHHH!

YAARRRGHHH!



STINKY!

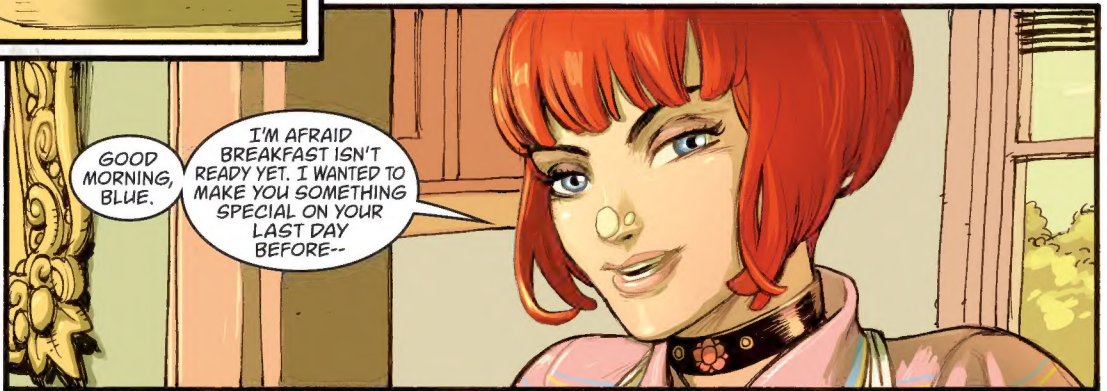
WHY, WHY, WHY DO YOU HAVE TO SCARE ME LIKE THAT EVERY MORNING?

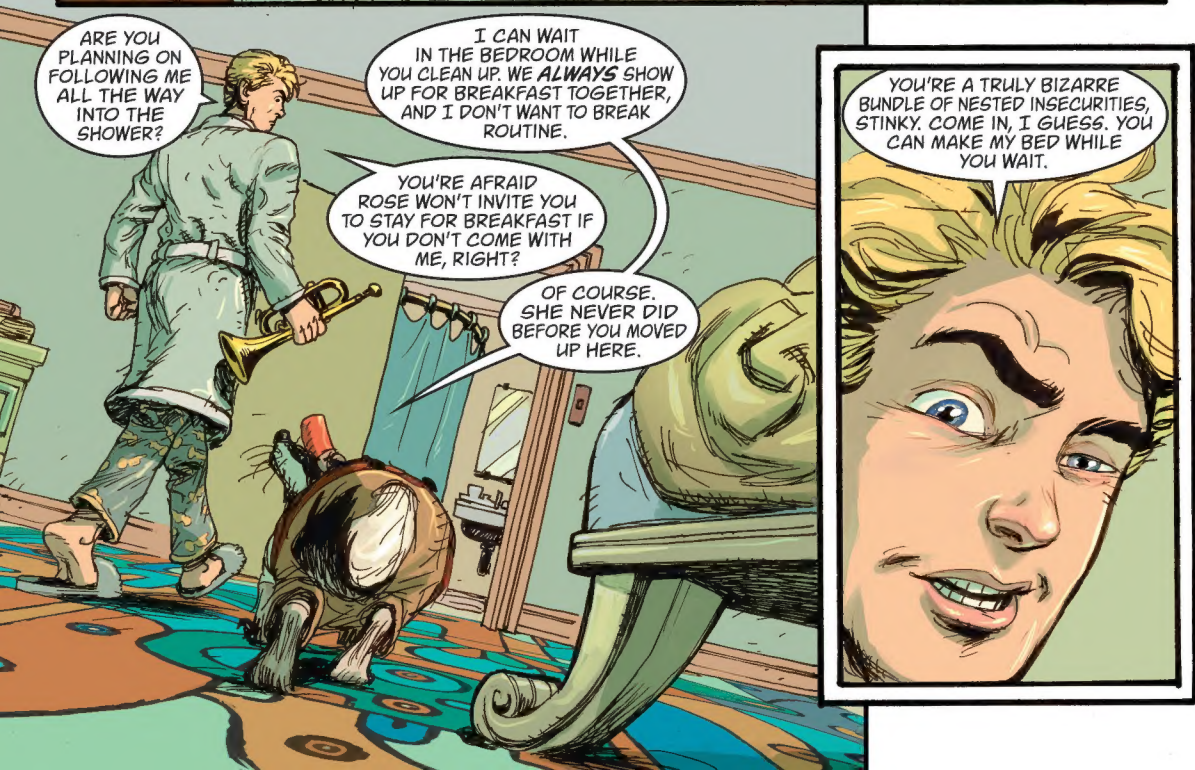
SCARE YOU?



I ONLY SCREAMED BECAUSE YOU DID. YOU ALWAYS SCREAM, EVEN THOUGH I TAKE EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT TO WAKE YOU GENTLY.

FROM NOW ON, I SWEAR TO BROCK, I'M GOING TO PROD YOU AWAKE FROM SAFELY ACROSS THE ROOM WITH A LONG STICK.





ATTENTION ALL FARM ANIMAL FABLES!
IMPORTANT MEETING IN TOWN SQUARE TODAY AT NOON!
PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD TO THOSE WHO CAN'T READ OR LIVE OUT IN THE FARM'S MORE REMOTE CORNERS.

WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THIS IS ALL ABOUT?

MORE WAR GAMES, I'LL BET.

FABLES!
IMPORTANT MEETING IN TOWN SQUARE TODAY AT NOON!
PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD TO THOSE WHO CAN'T READ OR LIVE OUT IN THE FARM'S MORE REMOTE CORNERS.

I DON'T THINK SO. IT SAYS JUST THE ANIMAL FABLES, NOT THE NEWCOMER HUMAN FABLES THAT LIVE IN THE TENTS.

WELL, IT'S GOING TO BE SOME SORT OF **BAD NEWS!** THEY DON'T PUT UP OFFICIAL NOTICES UNLESS IT'S **BAD NEWS!**

ATTENTION ALL FARM ANIMAL FABLES!
IMPORTANT MEETING IN TOWN SQUARE TODAY AT NOON!
PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD TO THOSE WHO CAN'T READ OR LIVE OUT IN THE FARM'S MORE REMOTE CORNERS.

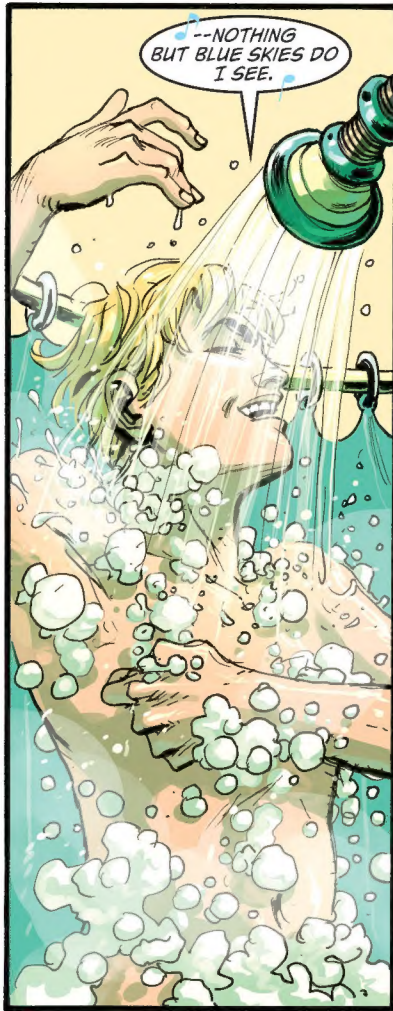
THE SKY'S ALWAYS FALLING FOR YOU, ISN'T IT?

ONLY BECAUSE THE SKY IS ALWAYS FALLING. TERRIBLE DISASTER'S ALWAYS JUST AROUND THE CORNER.

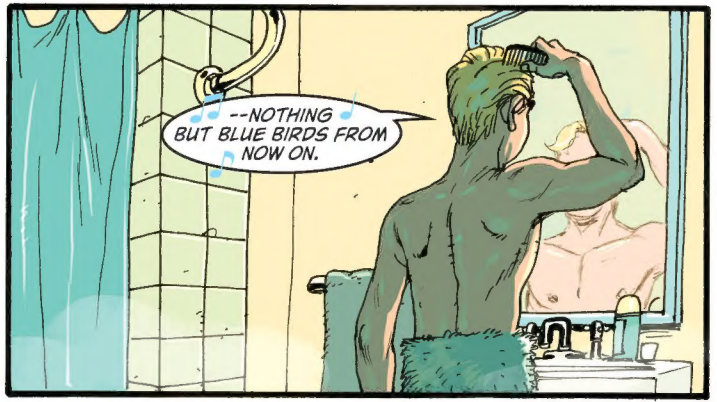
I BET THEY'VE RUN OUT OF **MUNDY** CHICKENS AND PIGS AND COWS--

--AND THIS MEETING IS TO INFORM US THAT THEY'VE DECIDED **FABLE** CHICKENS AND PIGS AND COWS ARE NOW APPROVED FOOD ITEMS FOR ALL THESE NEW HUMAN FABLES!

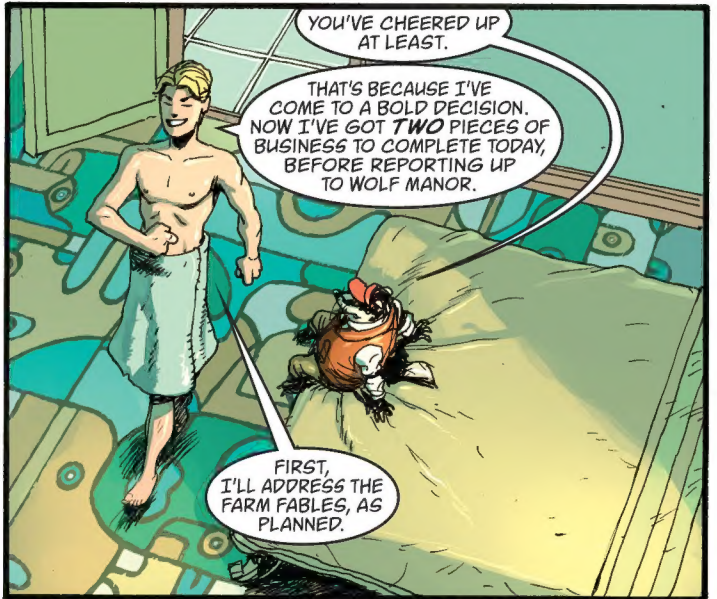
IT'S GOOD TO START PANICKING EARLY EVERY DAY. SAVES SO MUCH TIME.



--NOTHING BUT BLUE SKIES DO I SEE.



--NOTHING BUT BLUE BIRDS FROM NOW ON.



YOU'VE CHEERED UP AT LEAST.

THAT'S BECAUSE I'VE COME TO A BOLD DECISION. NOW I'VE GOT **TWO** PIECES OF BUSINESS TO COMPLETE TODAY, BEFORE REPORTING UP TO WOLF MANOR.

FIRST, I'LL ADDRESS THE FARM FABLES, AS PLANNED.



AND THEN I'M GOING TO ASK ROSE RED OUT.

ASK HER OUT WHERE?

HMMMM, YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT.

THERE'S REALLY NO TIME TO SQUEEZE IN A FORMAL DATE BEFORE I HAVE TO LEAVE FOR WHO KNOWS HOW LONG.



A DATE?

BUT I'M DEFINITELY GOING TO FINALLY TELL HER HOW I FEEL.

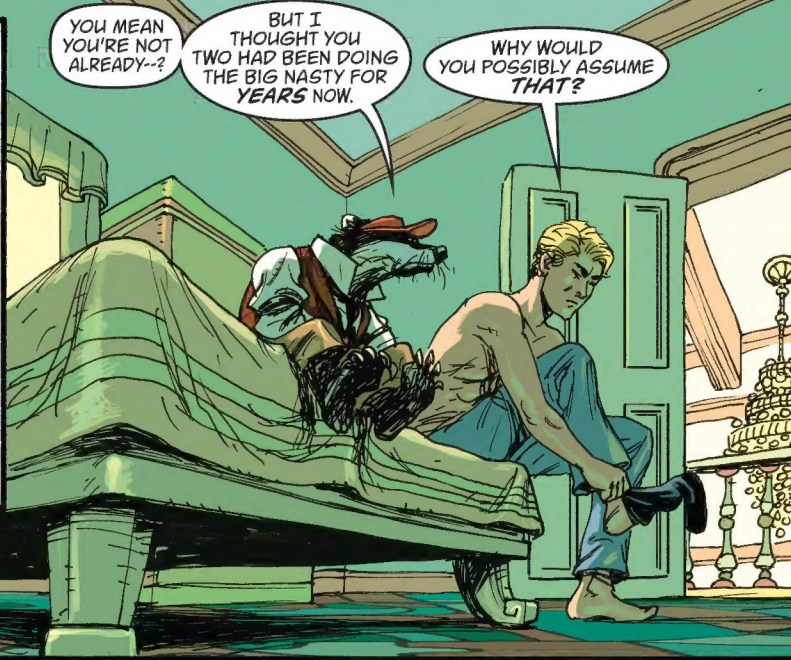
HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT WHAT?



HOW I FEEL ROMANTICALLY.

YOU AND ROSE RED?

OF COURSE ME AND ROSE RED. WHO ELSE WOULD I BE TALKING ABOUT?



YOU MEAN YOU'RE NOT ALREADY--?

BUT I THOUGHT YOU TWO HAD BEEN DOING THE BIG NASTY FOR YEARS NOW.

WHY WOULD YOU POSSIBLY ASSUME THAT?



NOT JUST ME. EVERYONE THINKS SO-- THOUGHT SO.

YOU REALLY AREN'T DOING IT? BUT THE EVIDENCE--



WHAT POSSIBLE EVIDENCE? YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW BETTER! EVERY DAMNED DAY YOU WAKE ME UP IN MY OWN BED, WHERE I'M ALL ALONE!

I JUST THOUGHT YOU TWO WERE BEING DISCREET. I ASSUMED YOU SNEAK BACK TO YOUR OWN ROOM EVERY NIGHT AFTER YOU'VE HAD YOUR ANIMAL WAY WITH HER ROYAL NIBS.



I MEAN, LOOK AT THE FACTS, MAN!

YOU GET YOURSELF SENT UP HERE FOR TWO YEARS OF HARD LABOR, BUT DOES SHE GIVE YOU ANY HARD LABOR? NO, SHE GIVES YOU EVERY CUSHY JOB AT THE FARM.



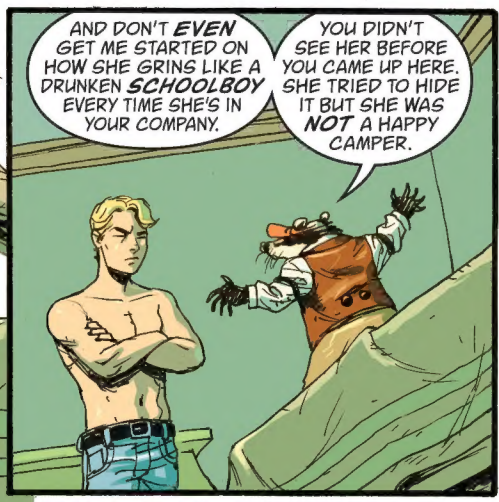
AND LONG AFTER THE TWO YEARS ARE DONE, ROSE RED TAKES A PAGE OUT OF THE OLD FLY-CATCHER GAMUT.

SHE COMES UP WITH A NEVER-ENDING SERIES OF IMAGINARY INFRACTIONS YOU'VE COMMITTED, SO THAT EXTRA TIME KEEPS GETTING ADDED TO YOUR SENTENCE.



WELL, THAT WAS MORE A MATTER OF--

THUS KEEPING YOU HERE, UNDER HER ROOF.



AND DON'T EVEN GET ME STARTED ON HOW SHE GRINS LIKE A DRUNKEN SCHOOLBOY EVERY TIME SHE'S IN YOUR COMPANY.

YOU DIDN'T SEE HER BEFORE YOU CAME UP HERE. SHE TRIED TO HIDE IT BUT SHE WAS NOT A HAPPY CAMPER.



DO YOU THINK--?

IF YOU TWO REALLY HAVEN'T BEEN RUTTING LIKE STOATS ALL THIS TIME, THEN LET ME HUMBLLY PROPOSE THAT YOU ARE INDEED THE WORLD'S MOST OBVIOUS IDIOT.

BECAUSE SHE'S CERTAINLY BEEN SENDING OUT SIGNALS A BLIND CELIBATE HERMIT MONK COULDN'T MISS.

HELL, BOY, I PICKED UP ON IT AND I'M NOT EVEN OF YOUR SPECIES.



REALLY?

UNMISTAKABLY. YOU'VE SQUANDERED A LOT OF TIME, COWPOKE.

THEN I'M DEFINITELY TELLING HER TODAY.

AND PROMPTLY
AT NOON...

SO THAT'S
THE *DEAL* IN A NUTSHELL.
THE KINGDOM OF HAVEN
IS OPEN TO ALL OF YOU WHO
DISLIKE BEING STUCK HERE
ON THE *FARM* AND WANT TO
MOVE *BACK* INTO THE
HOMELANDS.

GRANTED,
WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS,
THE NEW KINGDOM ISN'T
PRECISELY LOCATED IN THE
PARTICULAR HOMETOWN YOU
CAME FROM, *BUT* IT'S BEEN
PROVEN TIME AND AGAIN
TO BE SAFE.

AND I CAN
PERSONALLY
VOUCH THAT IT'S A
LOVELY PLACE.

SO WHAT'S
THE CATCH? A DEAL
THIS GOOD HAS TO
COME WITH ONE GREAT
MONSTER OF A
CATCH.



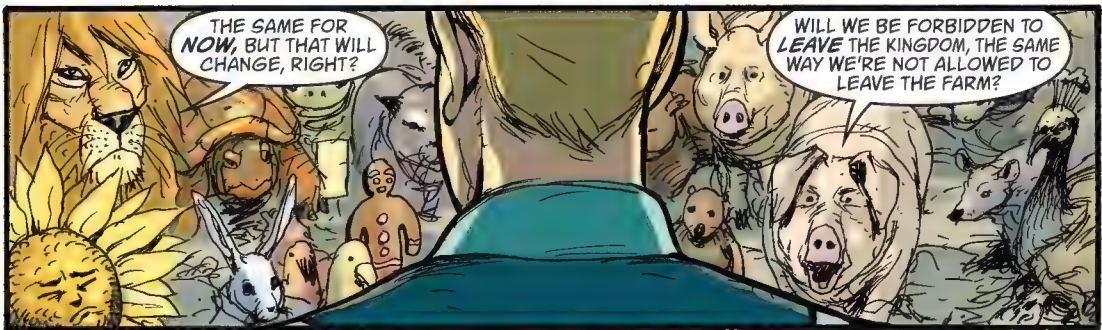


FAIR ENOUGH. HERE'S THE CATCH--**TWO** CATCHES, ACTUALLY.

FIRST, IF YOU MOVE TO HAVEN, YOU'RE JOINING A **KINGDOM**--A REAL KINGDOM WITH OLD-TIME VOWS OF FIDELITY AND SERVICE AND SUCH.

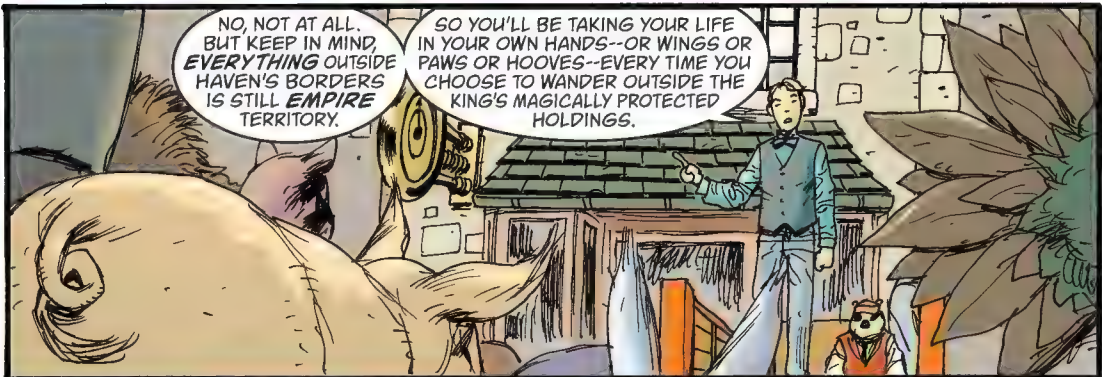
WHICH **MEANS** YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE UP FABLETOWN CITIZENSHIP. YOUR NAME WILL BE STRICKEN FROM THE FABLETOWN COMPACT.

SECOND, CURRENTLY THE BOUNDARIES OF HAVEN AREN'T ALL THAT MUCH LARGER THAN THE FARM, SO YOUR SAFE LIVING AREA WILL BE ABOUT THE **SAME** THERE AS IT IS HERE.



THE SAME FOR **NOW**, BUT THAT WILL CHANGE, RIGHT?

WILL WE BE FORBIDDEN TO **LEAVE** THE KINGDOM, THE SAME WAY WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO LEAVE THE FARM?



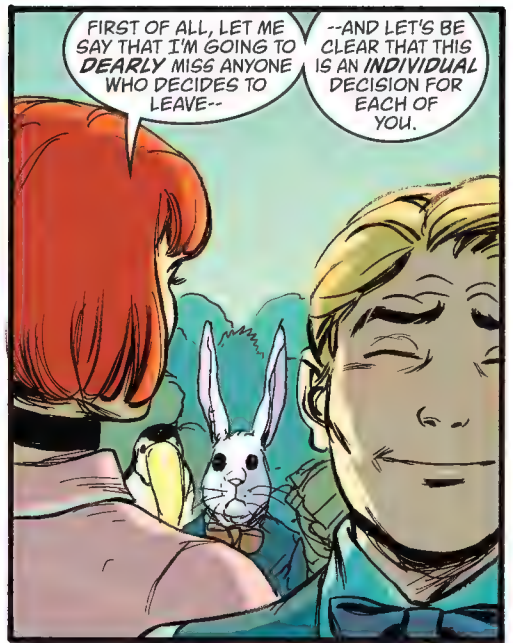
NO, NOT AT ALL. BUT KEEP IN MIND **EVERYTHING** OUTSIDE HAVEN'S BORDERS IS STILL **EMPIRE** TERRITORY.

SO YOU'LL BE TAKING YOUR LIFE IN YOUR OWN HANDS--OR WINGS OR PAWS OR HOOVES--EVERY TIME YOU CHOOSE TO WANDER OUTSIDE THE KING'S MAGICALLY PROTECTED HOLDINGS.



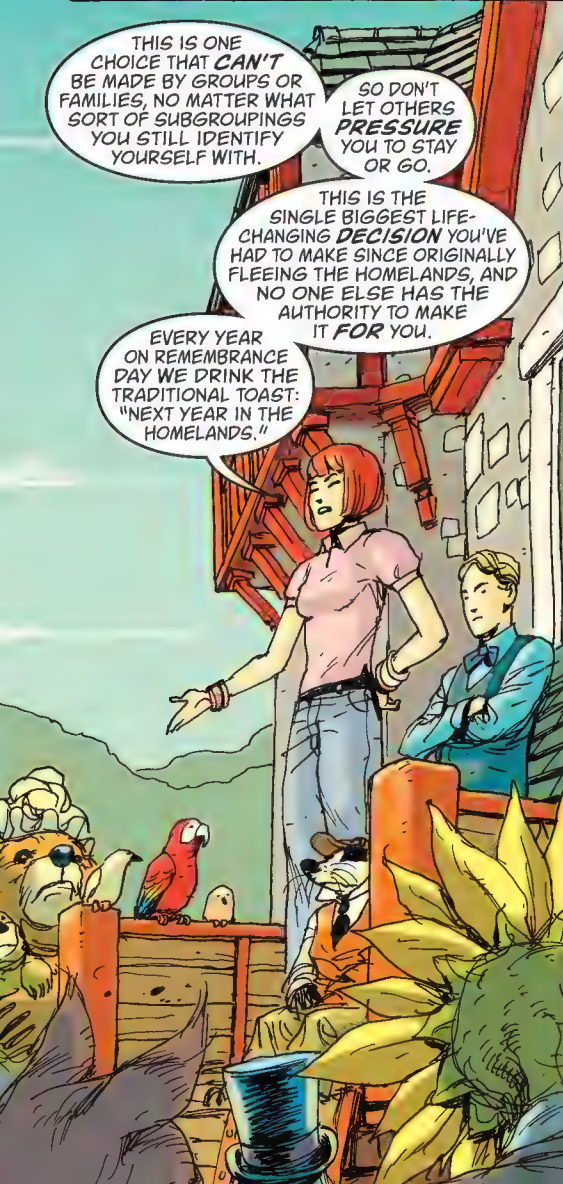
OKAY, SO THAT'S THE **OFFER**. ROSE RED HAS A FEW THINGS TO SAY ABOUT IT, BEFORE WE TAKE ANY MORE QUESTIONS.

THANKS, HANDSOME.



FIRST OF ALL, LET ME SAY THAT I'M GOING TO **DEARLY MISS** ANYONE WHO DECIDES TO LEAVE--

--AND LET'S BE CLEAR THAT THIS IS AN **INDIVIDUAL** DECISION FOR EACH OF YOU.



THIS IS ONE CHOICE THAT **CAN'T** BE MADE BY GROUPS OR FAMILIES, NO MATTER WHAT SORT OF SUBGROUPINGS YOU STILL IDENTIFY YOURSELF WITH.

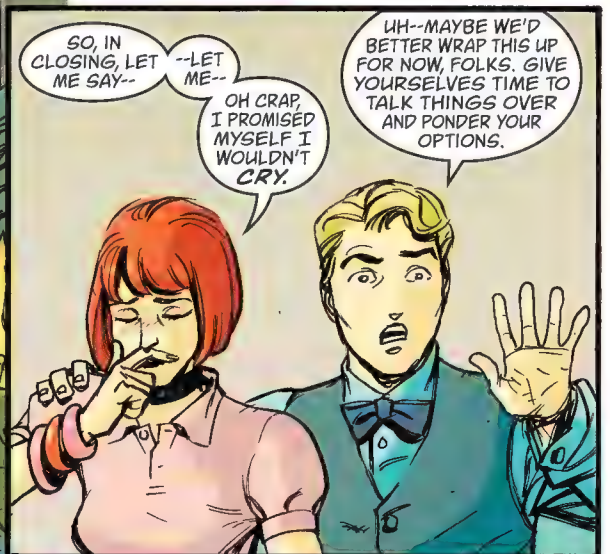
SO DON'T LET OTHERS **PRESSURE** YOU TO STAY OR GO.

THIS IS THE SINGLE BIGGEST LIFE-CHANGING **DECISION** YOU'VE HAD TO MAKE SINCE ORIGINALLY FLEEING THE HOMELANDS, AND NO ONE ELSE HAS THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE IT **FOR** YOU.

EVERY YEAR ON REMEMBRANCE DAY WE DRINK THE TRADITIONAL TOAST: "NEXT YEAR IN THE HOMELANDS."



WELL, MY DEAR FRIENDS, IT SEEMS THE ELUSIVE "NEXT YEAR" IS FINALLY **THIS** YEAR. STARTING MONDAY, THOSE OF YOU WHO CHOOSE TO CAN TAKE A GIANT STEP CLOSER TO HOME.

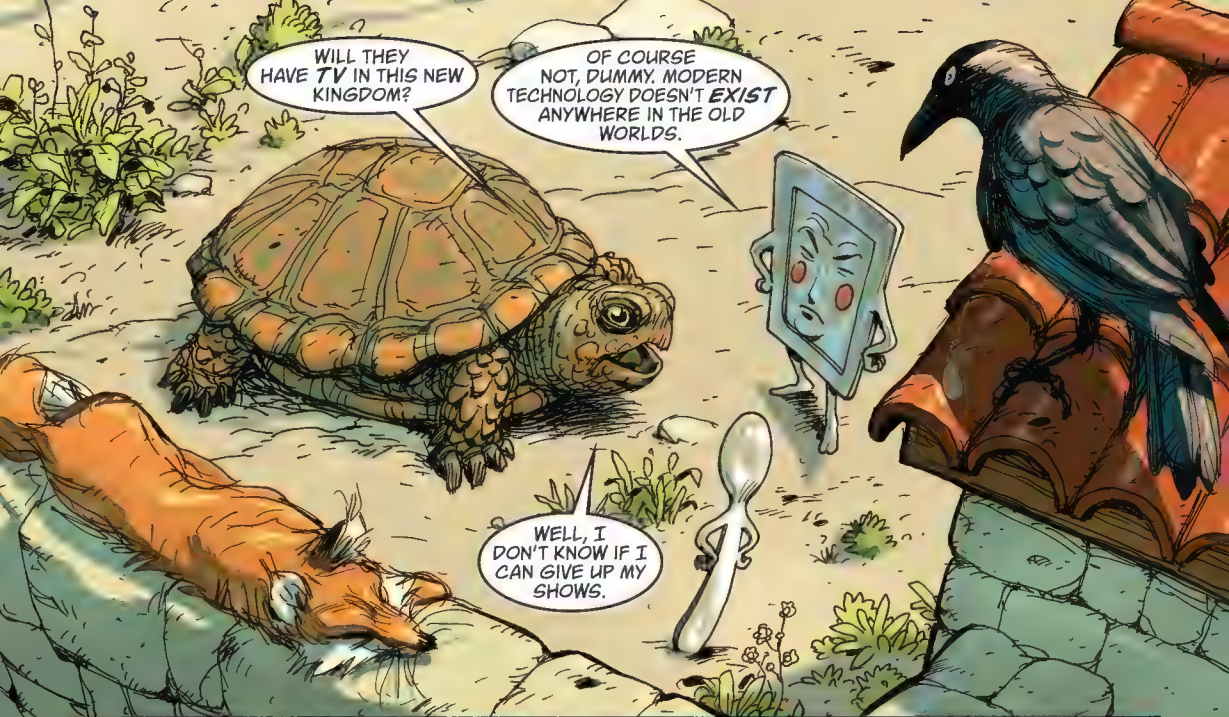


SO, IN CLOSING, LET ME SAY--

--LET ME--

OH CRAP, I PROMISED MYSELF I WOULDN'T CRY.

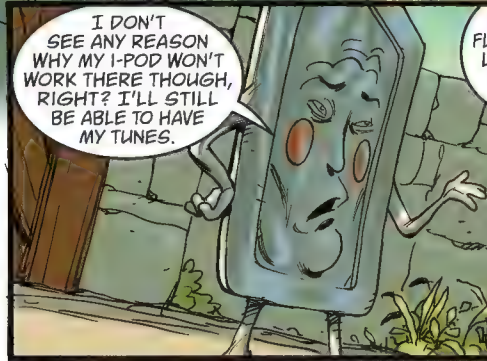
UH--MAYBE WE'D BETTER WRAP THIS UP FOR NOW, FOLKS. GIVE YOURSELVES TIME TO TALK THINGS OVER AND PONDER YOUR OPTIONS.



WILL THEY HAVE TV IN THIS NEW KINGDOM?

OF COURSE NOT, DUMMY. MODERN TECHNOLOGY DOESN'T EXIST ANYWHERE IN THE OLD WORLDS.

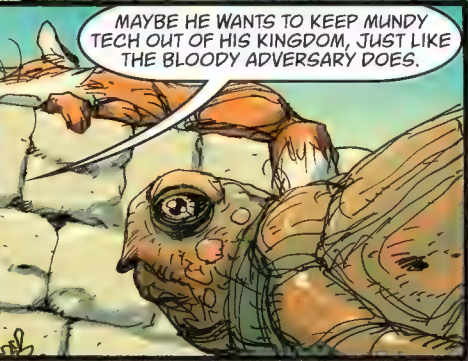
WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN GIVE UP MY SHOWS.



I DON'T SEE ANY REASON WHY MY I-POD WON'T WORK THERE THOUGH, RIGHT? I'LL STILL BE ABLE TO HAVE MY TUNES.



IF KING FLYCATCHER LETS YOU BRING IT.



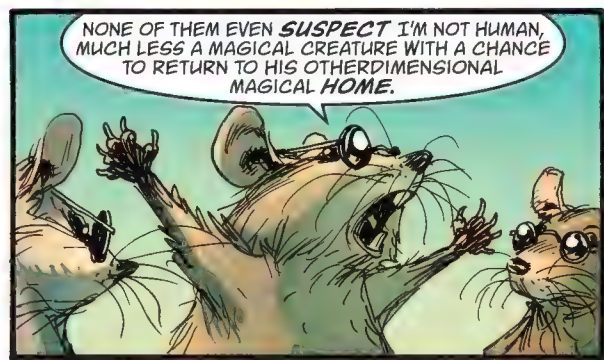
MAYBE HE WANTS TO KEEP MUNDY TECH OUT OF HIS KINGDOM, JUST LIKE THE BLOODY ADVERSARY DOES.



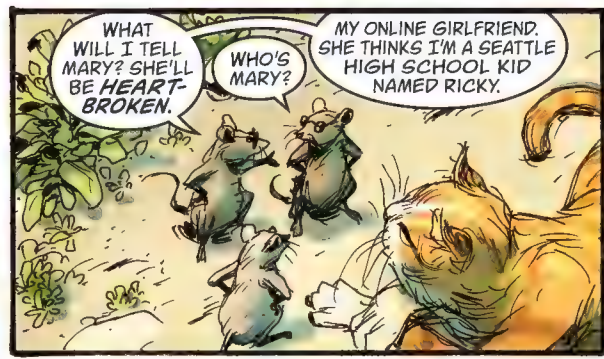
OKAY, SO THAT'S ANOTHER QUESTION I HAVE TO REMEMBER TO ASK.

AND NO MORE ELECTRIC LIGHTS, OR HOT AND COLD WATER OUT OF A FAUCET. AND SAY GOODBYE TO MOVIE NIGHT.

OH DEAR GOD! I JUST REALIZED! WHAT WILL I SAY TO ALL MY INTERNET FRIENDS?



NONE OF THEM EVEN SUSPECT I'M NOT HUMAN, MUCH LESS A MAGICAL CREATURE WITH A CHANCE TO RETURN TO HIS OTHERDIMENSIONAL MAGICAL HOME.



WHAT WILL I TELL MARY? SHE'LL BE HEART-BROKEN.

WHO'S MARY?

MY ONLINE GIRLFRIEND. SHE THINKS I'M A SEATTLE HIGH SCHOOL KID NAMED RICKY.

ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE HOMELANDS? AT LAST?

BUT NOT BACK TO *OUR* HOME. NOT BACK TO LILLIPUT ITSELF.

BUT AT LEAST A GIANT STEP CLOSER.

HOW DO *WE* KNOW? I DON'T KNOW THE WAY ALL THE DIFFERENT WORLDS FIT TOGETHER. DO *YOU*? MAYBE WE'RE NEXT DOOR TO LILLIPUT AND DON'T EVEN KNOW IT.

SO YOU'RE *NOT* GOING TO GO?

SMALLTOWN'S RIGHT *HERE*, WHERE WE BUILT IT. THIS IS *MY* HOME, WHERE I'VE GOT MY COTTAGE WITH MY WIFE AND THREE SONS.

IF WE MOVED TO THIS HAVEN PLACE WE'D HAVE TO START ALL OVER, *SO, NO, COUNT ME OUT.*



MY JOB WILL BASICALLY BE TO ACT AS A MESSENGER BETWEEN ALL THREE FRONTS IN THE HOMELANDS, AND THEN KEEP BOTH BAGHDAD AND FABLETOWN INFORMED.



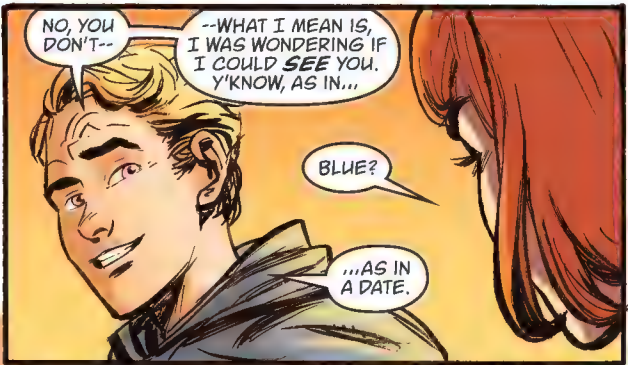
BUT, FROM TIME TO TIME I'LL ALSO BE ABLE TO STOP BACK HERE.

THAT'S GREAT NEWS, BLUE.



SO, WHEN I CAN GET BACK HERE, I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD SEE YOU.

WELL, OF COURSE WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER. THE FARM'S NOT THAT BIG.



NO, YOU DON'T--

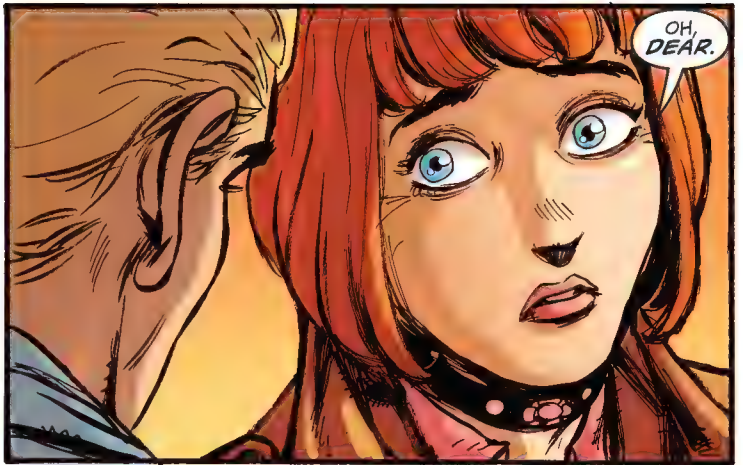
--WHAT I MEAN IS, I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD SEE YOU. Y'KNOW, AS IN...

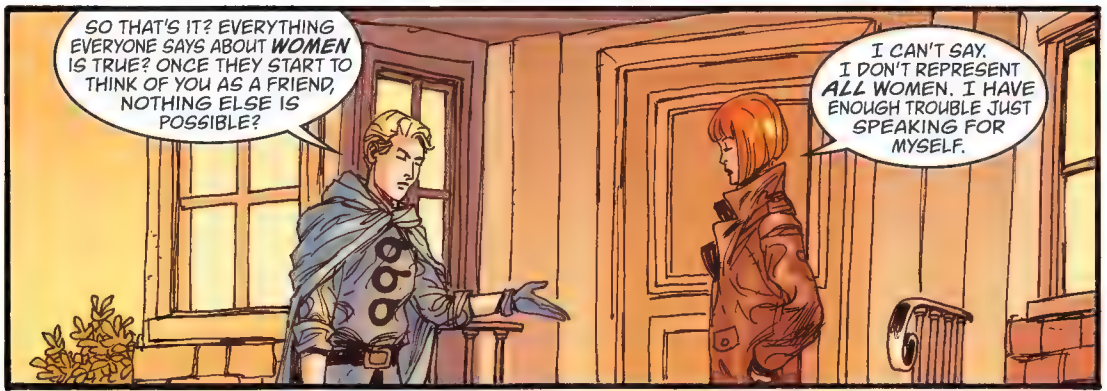
BLUE?

...AS IN A DATE.



WHAT I MEAN TO SAY IS--ASSUMING YOU FEEL THE SAME WAY...UHM...





SO THAT'S IT? EVERYTHING EVERYONE SAYS ABOUT **WOMEN** IS TRUE? ONCE THEY START TO THINK OF YOU AS A FRIEND, NOTHING ELSE IS POSSIBLE?

I CAN'T SAY. I DON'T REPRESENT **ALL** WOMEN. I HAVE ENOUGH TROUBLE JUST SPEAKING FOR MYSELF.



BUT I DON'T WANT THIS TO **RUIN** OUR FRIENDSHIP. WE CAN JUST GO ON AS BEFORE AND--

TOO LATE. THAT'S THE OTHER UNIVERSAL RULE. NOW THAT I'VE MADE SUCH A BIG DAMNED **FOOL** OF MYSELF WE'LL BOTH ALWAYS RECALL IT WHEN WE SEE EACH OTHER.



YOU AREN'T A FOOL. TAKE THAT **BACK**.

EVERY MOMENT FROM NOW ON WILL BE ONE OF THOSE **AWKWARD** ONES.

AND THAT ISN'T HOW REAL **FRIENDS** ARE AROUND EACH OTHER.



SO WHATEVER WE HAD IS **TOAST**. GONE. BURNT LIKE A WICK.

BUT, **BLUE--**



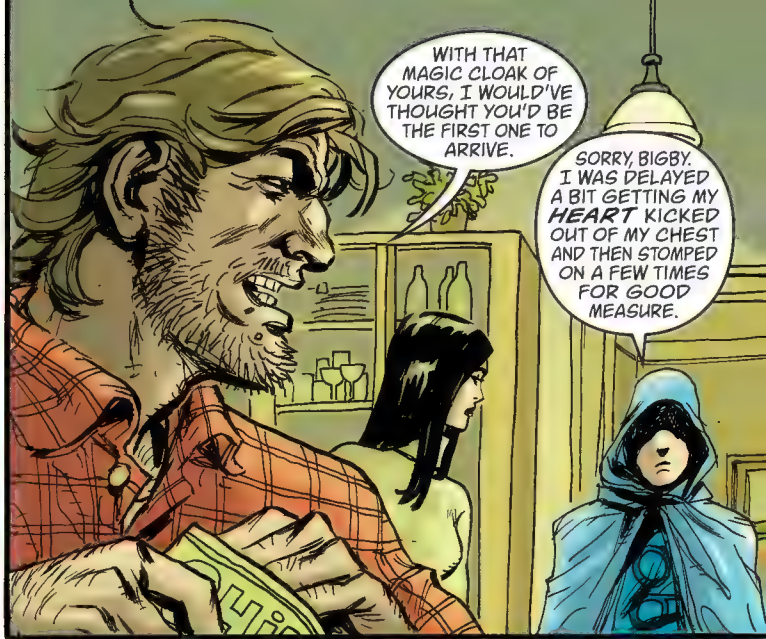
THANK GOD I'M GOING FAR AWAY TONIGHT.

NOTHING LIKE A GOOD **WAR** TO FORGET A NIGHT OF EXQUISITE SOUL-KILLING HUMILIATION.



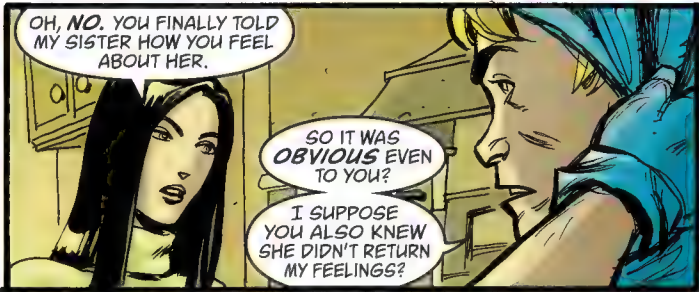
WOLF MANOR, LATER THAT SAME EVENING.

WELL, IT'S ABOUT *TIME* YOU MANAGED TO JOIN US, BLUE.



WITH THAT MAGIC CLOAK OF YOURS, I WOULD'VE THOUGHT YOU'D BE THE FIRST ONE TO ARRIVE.

SORRY, BIGBY. I WAS DELAYED A BIT GETTING MY HEART KICKED OUT OF MY CHEST AND THEN STOMPED ON A FEW TIMES FOR GOOD MEASURE.



OH, *NO*. YOU FINALLY TOLD MY SISTER HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT HER.

SO IT WAS *OBVIOUS* EVEN TO YOU?

I SUPPOSE YOU ALSO KNEW SHE DIDN'T RETURN MY FEELINGS?

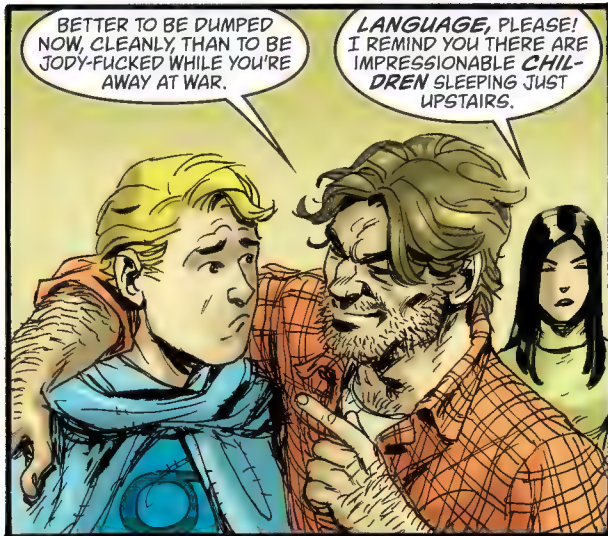


WELL, IF YOU'D ACTED *SOONER*, BACK WHEN SHE WAS STILL SO GA-GA ABOUT YOU...

YEAH, WELL, I WAS BUSY THEN, BEING ENTIRELY *OBVIOUS*.

TOUGH BREAK, BLUE...

...BUT BETTER TO GET IT OUT OF THE WAY *NOW*, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.



BETTER TO BE DUMPED NOW, CLEANLY, THAN TO BE JODY-FUCKED WHILE YOU'RE AWAY AT WAR.

LANGUAGE, PLEASE! I REMIND YOU THERE ARE IMPRESSIONABLE *CHILDREN* SLEEPING JUST UPSTAIRS.



SORRY, HONEY, BUT IT IS A TIME-HONORED MILITARY TERM.

COME THIS WAY, BLUE.



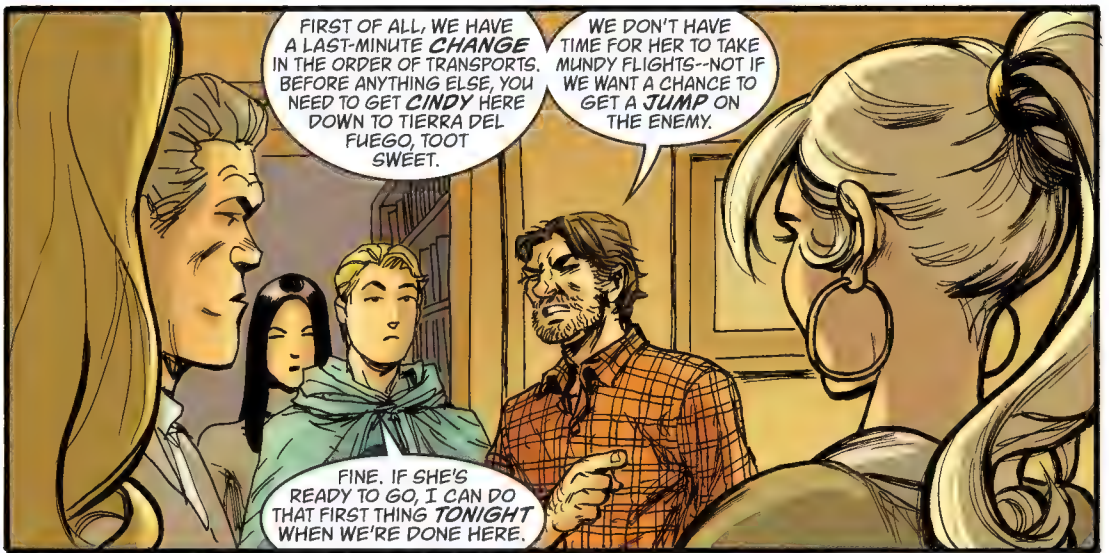
THE OTHERS
ARE ALREADY
HERE.



FINALLY.
MAYBE NOW WE
CAN GET THIS LAST
WAR-COUNCIL
UNDER WAY.

YOU
LOOK A BIT
DOWN IN THE
DUMPS, BLUE.
WHAT'S
WRONG?

NOTHING
RELEVANT, SIR. IF
WE COULD JUST
BEGIN?



FIRST OF ALL, WE HAVE A LAST-MINUTE **CHANGE** IN THE ORDER OF TRANSPORTS. BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE, YOU NEED TO GET **CINDY** HERE DOWN TO TIERRA DEL FUEGO, TOOT SWEET.

WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR HER TO TAKE MUNDY FLIGHTS--NOT IF WE WANT A CHANCE TO GET A **JUMP** ON THE ENEMY.

FINE. IF SHE'S READY TO GO, I CAN DO THAT FIRST THING **TONIGHT** WHEN WE'RE DONE HERE.



NO, NOT FINE! WHY IS CINDERELLA HERE AT ALL? SHE OWNS A SHOE STORE! HOW DOES **THAT** QUALIFY HER FOR SOME **CLANDESTINE** MISSION?



SHE'S NEEDED TO RUN AN IMPORTANT **ERRAND** FOR FRAU TOTENKINDER, BEAUTY.

AND YOU STILL CAN'T GIVE US A CLUE WHAT IT IS? I'M **ONLY** THE **MAYOR**, FOR GOODNESS' SAKE, AND MR. BEAST HERE IS YOUR **SUCCESSOR** IN RUNNING SPY OPS. HE AT **LEAST** SHOULD KNOW.



SPY OPS? BUT THIS IS JUST CINDERELLA. SHE--**ONLY--SELLS--SHOES!**

SORRY, PRINCE CHARMING, BUT THE **FEWER** WHO KNOW, THE **FEWER** WHO CAN SPILL THE BEANS. TRUST ME THAT IT WILL HELP THE WAR EFFORT.



TOTENKINDER WAS RELUCTANT ENOUGH TO EVEN LET **ME** IN ON IT.

ONLY BECAUSE WE'LL NEED **YOU** TO PULL MY FAT OUT OF THE FIRE, IN CASE EVERYTHING THAT CAN GO WRONG **DOES** GO WRONG.



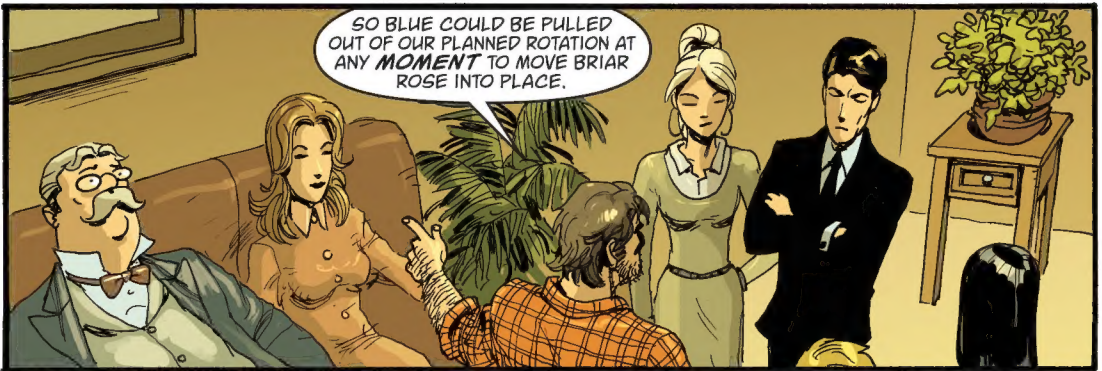
LET'S MOVE ALONG, SHALL WE? AFTER YOU GET CINDY ON HER WAY, I'LL NEED YOU NEXT FOR TRANSPORT TO BAGHDAD.

AND OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS YOU'LL BE BRINGING THE **BULK** OF MY FORCES OVER.



YES, THAT'S STILL **NEXT** ON BLUE'S SCHEDULE.

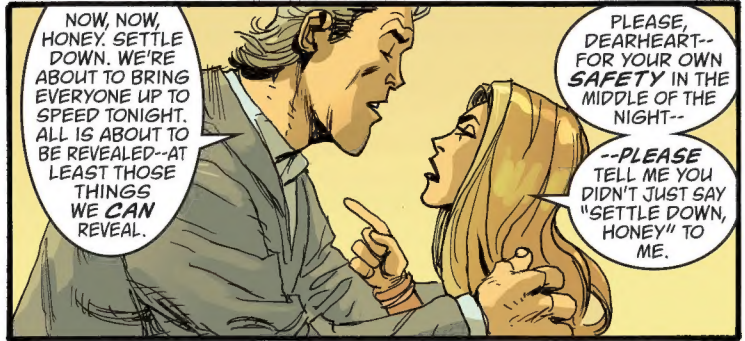
UNLESS WE GET GOOD NEWS FROM THE IMPERIAL CITY. ONCE THAT WINDOW OPENS, WE CAN'T COUNT ON IT REMAINING OPEN FOR VERY LONG.



SO BLUE COULD BE PULLED OUT OF OUR PLANNED ROTATION AT ANY **MOMENT** TO MOVE BRIAR ROSE INTO PLACE.



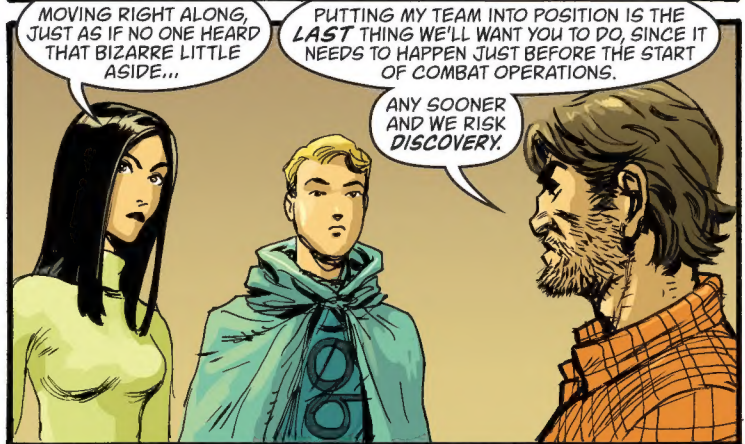
NOW **BRIAR ROSE** IS SUDDENLY SOME KIND OF **ENEMY** INFILTRATOR TOO? AM I THE ONLY ONE HERE WHO **ISN'T** A SECRET SUPER SPY?



NOW, NOW, HONEY. SETTLE DOWN. WE'RE ABOUT TO BRING EVERYONE UP TO SPEED TONIGHT. ALL IS ABOUT TO BE REVEALED--AT LEAST THOSE THINGS WE **CAN** REVEAL.

PLEASE, DEARHEART--FOR YOUR OWN **SAFETY** IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT--

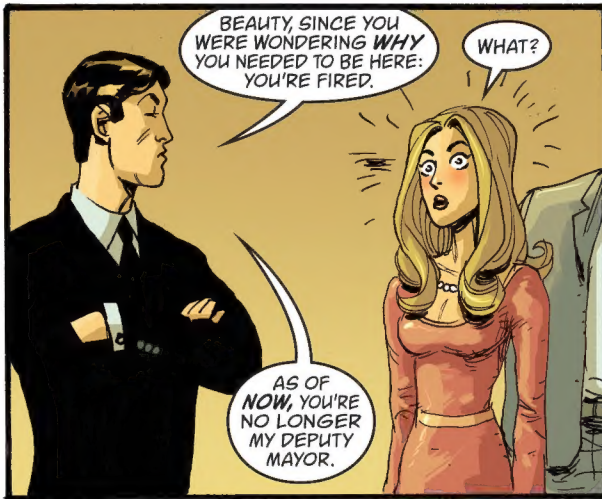
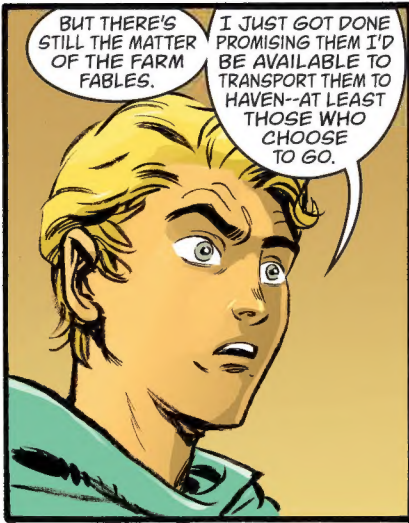
--PLEASE TELL ME YOU DIDN'T JUST SAY "SETTLE DOWN, HONEY" TO ME.



MOVING RIGHT ALONG, JUST AS IF NO ONE HEARD THAT BIZARRE LITTLE ASIDE...

PUTTING MY TEAM INTO POSITION IS THE **LAST** THING WE'LL WANT YOU TO DO, SINCE IT NEEDS TO HAPPEN JUST BEFORE THE START OF COMBAT OPERATIONS.

ANY SOONER AND WE RISK **DISCOVERY**.



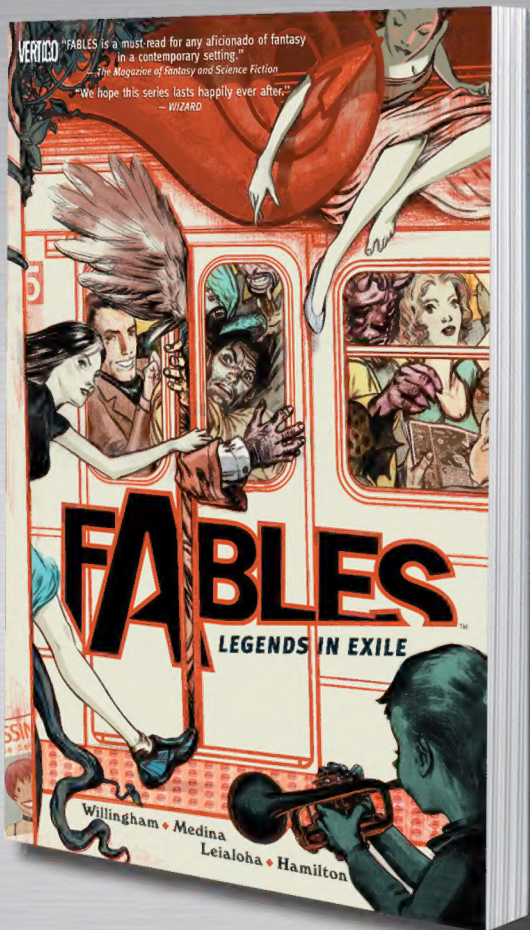
"FABLES is an excellent series in the tradition of SANDMAN, one that rewards careful attention and loyalty." – ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

BILL WILLINGHAM

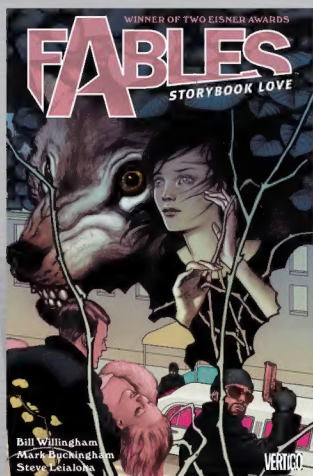
"[A] wonderfully twisted concept... features fairy tale characters banished to the noirish world of present-day New York." – THE WASHINGTON POST



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- VOL. 10: THE GOOD PRINCE**
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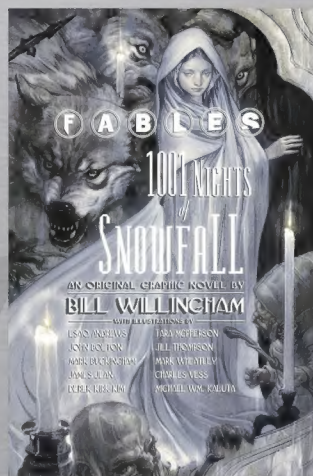
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